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A RETRACTABLE VEHICLE ROOF

Background of the Invention

The present invention relates to a retractable vehicle roof, and more particularly to such a roof comprising a front roof element and a rear roof element that are rigid and movable between a position in which they cover the passenger compartment of the vehicle and a position in which they are stowed in the rear trunk of the vehicle.

Such a retractable roof makes it possible to transform a vehicle of the saloon or coupe type into a vehicle of the cabriolet type.

Summary of the Invention

FR-A-2 828 137 discloses a retractable roof whose rear element is received vertically at the front of the rear trunk, and whose front element is received horizontally in the trunk. Unfortunately, the arrangement described is not applicable when the length of the rear element is greater than the height of the trunk.

Besides, no means are provided for stowing the front element of the roof in the rear trunk while also maintaining the rear element in the covering position.

An object of the present invention is to mitigate those drawbacks.

More particularly, an object of the invention is to provide a roof that is retractable into a rear trunk that is of relatively low height.

Another object of the invention is to provide a retractable roof whose rear element can remain in place while the front element is stowed in the rear trunk.

A further object of the invention is to provide a retractable roof which can be stowed and deployed without needing the rear trunk to be opened, it then being possible for the rear trunk to be a trunk that opens from the rear forwards only.

To this end, the invention provides a retractable vehicle roof, comprising a front roof element and a rear roof element that are rigid and movable between a position in which they cover the passenger compartment of the vehicle and a position in which they are stowed in the rear trunk of the vehicle, said retractable roof being characterized in that:

- the rear roof element has its rear portion guided by a first runner that is secured to the structure of the vehicle or to the rear roof element, and has its front portion secured to a second runner co-operating with a drive arm hinged to the structure of the vehicle and actuated by drive means;

- a rigid member connects said arm to the rear portion of the rear roof element;

- the front roof element has its rear portion guided by a third runner whose rear portion is guided in said first runner and whose front portion is hinged to said arm; and

- means are provided for causing the front roof element to slide on said third runner.

In a particular embodiment, the retractable roof of the invention further comprises locking means for locking said second runner on said drive arm.

More particularly, said locking means comprise a hook mounted on said second runner and arranged to lock a finger integral with or secured to said arm with a lug integral with or secured to said runner, and means for actuating said hook.

Also in a particular embodiment, the retractable roof of the invention further comprises means for unlocking said second runner from said drive arm, and for locking said second runner to the structure of the vehicle, when the roof elements are stowed in the rear trunk of the vehicle.

It is thus possible to bring the rear element of the roof into the covering position while leaving the front element stowed in the rear trunk of the vehicle.

More particularly, the means for actuating said hook may be arranged to lock said hook to the structure of the vehicle and to prevent the third runner from moving relative to the first runner.

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

A particular embodiment of the invention is described below by way of non-limiting example and with reference to the accompanying diagrammatic drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a side view of a roof of the invention, shown in the covering position;

Figure 2 is a larger-scale view in section along line II-II of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a view similar to the Figure 1 view, with the roof being shown in the process of being stowed away;

Figure 4 is a view similar to Figures 1 and 3, with the roof being shown in the stowed position;

Figure 5 is a view similar to Figures 1, 3, and 4, with the roof being shown partially open;

Figure 6 is a larger-scale view of the mechanism of the roof in its Figure 4 position;

Figure 7 is a view in section along line VII-VII of Figure 6;

Figure 8 is a view in section along line VIII-VIII of Figure 6; Figure 9 is a view in section along line IX-IX of Figure 6; and Figure 10 is a larger-scale view of the detail 10 of Figure 6.

#### Detailed Description of the Invention

5 Figure 1 shows the structure 1 of a vehicle, the rear trunk 2 thereof as provided with its lid 3, and the roof in two portions, namely a rear portion 4 and a front portion 5.

The mechanism that is described below is substantially symmetrical about the midplane of the vehicle. Therefore,  
10 only one of its sides is described below.

At its rear portion, the roof element 4 supports brackets 6, on each of which a guide finger 7 is mounted. The guide finger co-operates with a runner 8 secured to the structure of the vehicle.

15 In addition, the roof element 4 is actuated by an actuator 9 via an arm 10. The arm 10 has one of its ends hinged to the structure of the vehicle about a transverse axis 11, and its other end is provided with a finger 12 engaged in a runner 13 that is secured to the rear element 4.

20 The front roof element 5 is mounted to slide via its extension 14 in a runner 15.

The runner 15 has its rear portion guided by a guide finger 16 engaged in a second groove in the runner 8 (Figure 9). The front end of the runner 15 is connected to the arm 10 at  
25 a midpoint thereof via a pin having a transverse axis 17 for the purpose of retracting the runner 15 into the trunk of the vehicle at the same time as the rear roof element 4 is being retracted into said trunk.

A rigid rod 18 has its rear end connected to the bracket 6  
30 via a pin having an axis 19. The other end of the rod 18 is

connected to the arm 10 in a midplane thereof via a pin having a transverse axis 20.

The rod 18 thus makes it possible to keep a constant gap between the arm 10 and the rear of the rear roof portion 4.

5 The rod also drives the rear roof element 4 when said rod is pushed by the arm 10.

As shown in Figure 2, the front roof element 5 is driven on the runner 15 by means of a motor 21 that is secured to the element 5. To this end, a finger 22 guides the element 5 in  
10 the runner 15, and a rack system 23 that is secured to the wheel 22 and that is driven by the motor 21 makes it possible to actuate the element 5 in the runner 15.

A hook 25 is mounted to slide at 26 on the runner 15. The hook 25 is suitable for locking onto a finger 27 that is  
15 secured to a part 28 which is itself secured to the structure of the vehicle (Figure 8).

The hook 25 is actuated by a motor 29 that is secured to the runner 15, and it is suitable for sliding in the longitudinal direction of the vehicle on the member 30.

20 The arm 10 is also provided with a finger 30 that is suitable for coming into abutment on a lug 31 that is secured to or integral with the slide 15 (Figure 7).

At the end opposite the end on which the hook 25 is disposed, the motor 29 actuates a rod 32 connected to a link  
25 33. The link 33 is hinged to the rear end of the runner 15 about a transverse axis 34 (Figure 10).

When the roof is in the closed position, above the passenger compartment of the vehicle, the front element 5 of the roof is locked onto to the arm 10 via the runner 15. The finger  
30 30 is locked between the front edge of the hook 25 and the lug 31. The roof elements are thus locked.

During opening, the front element 5 is driven along the runner 15 by the motor 21. The first stage of opening consists in disengaging the rear edge of the front element 5 from the front edge of the rear element 4. The arm 10  
5 pivots backwards by means of the cylinder 9. This pivoting makes it possible for the front element 5 to engage under the rear element 4, as shown in Figure 3.

The roof is then driven into the rear trunk by the continued pivoting of the arm 10 which also drives the runner 15.  
10 During this movement, the distance between the front roof element 5 and the rear roof element 4 is kept by the runner 13 co-operating with the finger 12.

The roof is then in the configuration shown in Figure 4. In this configuration, a luggage cover can be fitted and  
15 tensioned between the back of the seat and the front edge of the lid 3 of the rear trunk.

When the roof elements are stowed in the rear trunk, the front element 5 and the runner 15 can be unlocked from the rear element 4 so as to be locked to the structure of the  
20 vehicle and to the runner 8.

For this purpose, the motor 29 moves the hook 25 backwards, thereby causing the runner 15 to be unlocked from the arm 10. The hook 25 then comes to lock onto the finger 27 which, via the part 28, is secured to the structure of the  
25 vehicle.

Besides, the motor 29 actuates the rod 32 and the link 33. The link 33 is thus locked onto the rear edge of the runner 8, thereby preventing the runner 15 from moving along the runner 8.

30 The rear element 4 of the roof can then go back up into the configuration shown in Figure 5.

It should be noted that the mechanism described above enables the roof elements to be stowed horizontally in the rear trunk. But it would be equally possible to stow them vertically provided their length does not exceed the height  
5 of the trunk.

It should also be noted that the runner for guiding the rear element of the roof could, instead of being secured to said element, equally well be secured to the structure of the vehicle. In which case, said runner would co-operate with  
10 the guide fingers secured to or integral with the walls of the rear trunk.